



## Tips for a Thinner Thanksgiving



Year after year, most of us pack on at least a pound or more during the holidays -- and keep the extra weight permanently. Thanksgiving does not have to sabotage your weight. With a little know-how, you can satisfy your desire for traditional favorites and still enjoy a guilt-free Thanksgiving feast.

### Get Active

Create a calorie deficit by exercising to burn off extra calories before you ever indulge in your favorite foods, suggests Connie Diekman, MEd, RD, former president of the American Dietetic Association (ADA).

"'Eat less and exercise more' is the winning formula to prevent weight gain during the holidays," Diekman says. "Increase your steps or lengthen your fitness routine the weeks ahead and especially the day of the feast." Make fitness a family adventure, recommends Susan Finn, PhD, RD, chair of the American Council on Fitness and Nutrition: "Take a walk early in the day and then again after dinner. It is a wonderful way for families to get physical activity and enjoy the holiday together."

### Lighten Up

Whether you are hosting Thanksgiving dinner or bringing a few dishes to share, make your recipes healthier with less fat, sugar, and calories. "There is more sugar and fat in most recipes than is needed, and no one will notice the difference if you skim calories by using lower calorie ingredients," says Diekman.

Her suggestions:

- Use fat-free chicken broth to baste the turkey and make gravy.
- Use sugar substitutes in place of sugar and/or fruit purees instead of oil in baked goods.
- Reduce oil and butter wherever you can.
- Try plain yogurt or fat-free sour cream in creamy dips, mashed potatoes, and casseroles.

### Police Your Portions

- Thanksgiving tables are bountiful and beautiful displays of traditional family favorites. Before you fill your plate, survey the buffet table and decide what you're going to choose. Then select reasonable-sized portions of foods you cannot live without. "Don't waste your calories on foods that you can have all year long," suggests Diekman. "Fill your plate with small portions of holiday favorites that only come around once a year so you can enjoy desirable, traditional foods."
- Skip the Seconds. Try to resist the temptation to go back for second helpings. "Leftovers are much better the next day, and if you limit yourself to one plate, you are less likely to overeat and have more room for a delectable dessert," Diekman says.
- Choose the Best Bets on the Buffet. While each of us has our own favorites, keep in mind that some holiday foods are better choices than others. "White turkey meat, plain vegetables, roasted sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, defatted gravy, and pumpkin pie tend to be the best bets because they are lower in fat and calories," says Diekman. But she adds that, "if you keep your portions small, you can enjoy whatever you like."

### Be Realistic

The holiday season is a time for celebration. With busy schedules and so many extra temptations, this is a good time to strive for weight maintenance instead of weight loss. "Shift from a mindset of weight loss to weight maintenance," says Finn. "You will be ahead of the game if you can avoid gaining any weight over the holidays."

*Source: WebMD - By Kathleen M. Zelman, MPH, RD, LD, Reviewed by Louise Chang, MD. Some content has been adapted for space.*

Full article at: <http://www.webmd.com/diet/features/10-tips-for-a-thinner-thanksgiving>

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